



2006 Report on Progress Toward the Goals

April 2006

Dear Residents,

This is the second town-wide report on progress toward the vision and goals established in January of 2001. We would like to share with you some of the activities and decisions since the last report in 2003 that have moved Lexington closer to meeting some of the goals, and to invite you to comment on some of the issues.

The full range of plans and actions cannot be represented in a single document. More detailed information and various reports are available on the 2020 Vision web page – go to <http://ci.lexington.ma.us> and click on Committees & Commissions, and then Lexington 2020 Vision Committee. You may also obtain more information by contacting one of the committee members, or by calling the Town Manager's Office at 781-862-0500 x244.

Lexington 2020 Vision is an ongoing long-range public effort to empower and engage residents in shaping the Town of Lexington's future. It is intended to provoke discussion, support dialogue, and help guide decision-making and action throughout the community. We plan to renew the vision and goals in 2007. Please review this information and then let us know what you think. Thank you.

The Lexington 2020 Vision Committee



Recent Community Progress Toward Goals

- The Lexington Farmers' Market opened last summer of the corner of Mass. Avenue & Woburn St.
- The driveway between the bank and real estate office in the Center will be closed to cars and redesigned to create a pedestrian way connecting to the Depot Square parking lot.
- The Community Preservation Act, accepted at the March 6, 2006 election, provides State funding to match a 3% local tax surcharge to be used for open space, historic preservation, affordable housing, and public recreation projects.
- The KeySpan natural gas incident was successfully managed through the Town's public safety functions (Fire, Police, Inspections, Health, Public Works).
- Preparation for NEASC visiting Lexington High School accreditation review team in 2008 focuses on Mission Statement, Academic Expectations, Curriculum & Instruction Rubrics.
- Lexington Public Schools established a committee to review issues related to the Academic Achievement Gap and SPED recommendations.
- The School Department developed a 5-year Capital Improvement Program that recognizes the cyclic nature of facilities renewal and works toward level funding of capital projects over time.
- The Sidewalk Committee has sponsored Walk-to School programs and is conducting an inventory of sidewalks in Lexington.
- Several grants have funded a public education program on the harmful effects of engine idling.
- Major boards now post agendas and minutes on Town's website.
- Friends of the Council on Aging will fund a half-time Volunteer Coordinator.
- Selectmen formed a Traffic Mitigation Group to coordinate review of traffic issues and identify priorities for improvement.
- *More highlights on Town website at <http://ci.lexington.ma.us>*

Completed Task Forces – 2005 Recommendations and Results

Constructive Community Discourse:

This Task Force set out to: 1) identify reasons why communication and discourse among citizens and between town and citizens can be problematic; and 2) create an action plan for improving both the structure and the quality of public communication and discourse. Their top priority recommendations are identified below, along with implementing decisions and actions to date.

- **Training** for committee and board chairs and members – over 60 chairs of boards or committees participated in a 2-hour training session on their roles and responsibilities, including how to maintain civil discourse during meetings. This program was well received, and Town staff plan to offer the training on an annual basis.
- Development of an improved town **Website** – a Website Coordinator has been identified, and a small group is working toward a redesign of the Town's website to make it more informative and easy to use.
- Creation of a **Gathering Place** – no new project being planned, but the new Meeting Room at Cary Library is used by many groups and a future new Senior Center might have space for informal gathering together.

Budget Process and Communication:

This taskforce evaluated and proposed improvements to Lexington's annual budget development in the areas of process, communication, and analytics. Recommendations and follow-up actions are described below.

- Create a **Financial Policy Review Committee** – this committee submitted its report to the Selectmen in March of 2006. The FY2007 Recommended Budget begins implementation of several of the committee's recommendations.
- Revise the **budget development schedule** to obtain earlier vote by Selectmen – the Selectmen, School Committee, and 2 finance committees at a summit meeting established a schedule for budget development to be completed by the first week in February; although this target was not met, the earlier start to the process provided needed time for discussing the issues.
- Implement a comprehensive **communications plan** to disseminate budget information within the community – the Selectmen support increased public communication and outreach around FY07 budget issues, and one of their new biweekly cable TV programs was on the subject of the budget.
- Establish a **Metrics Review Committee** – the Selectmen plan to work with staff to identify the areas of greatest interest for performance measures in future budgets.

New Areas of Focus for 2006

Preliminary work is underway to launch Task Forces in two new areas in the fall.

Economic Development: the basic question is whether the Town wishes to encourage commercial/industrial development to build up the tax base, given the tradeoffs such as increased traffic. A number of issues and actions need to be considered, including the value of having an Economic Development Officer, the desired mix of different types of businesses, and the impacts of changing technologies on business development. These discussions need to involve a variety of business and local government interests as well as residents, Town Meeting members, and other opinion leaders in the community.

Sustainable Lexington: these conversations could include issues such as “green” design of public buildings, purchase of alternate-fuel vehicles, reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emission, waste stream management, and targeting of development. The roles played by Lexington residents, the Town as a whole, regional cooperative efforts, and state and federal governments should all be considered.

2020 Vision Goals

The goals listed below were developed through a comprehensive public process to create a shared vision for Lexington in the year 2020. These goals are validated and revised through ongoing community input. They provide an important long-term context for municipal decision-making and discussion on present issues.

THEME I: Promote and Strengthen Community Character

1. Design and promote community gathering places and events.
2. Develop criteria and mechanism for preserving the physical character of residential neighborhoods.
3. Provide increased housing options to promote diversity of income and age.
4. Create strong incentives to maintain and expand affordable housing.
5. Integrate transportation infrastructure and/or environmental aesthetics with commercial districts and historic and housing characteristics.
6. Preserve and maintain historical areas, and celebrate the Town's place in national history for residents and tourists.
7. Ensure public safety.

THEME II: Foster Educational Excellence

1. Ensure that all citizens are aware of and have access to life-long education and learning opportunities.
2. Continuously update and modify the programming, grounds and facilities, and materials and equipment and learning facilities.
3. Provide sufficient funding for educational and learning opportunities.
4. Develop and implement a town-run partnership program to promote the concept of community partnerships with all educational and learning facilities (with business involvement, intergenerational learning, all governing bodies, students, families).
5. Develop and implement an ongoing evaluation process for all systems associated with life-long learning.

THEME III: Sustain and Enhance Physical Character and the Larger Environment

1. Improve traffic and parking conditions in the Center.
2. Increase protected open space.
3. Preserve and enhance local air quality.
4. Reduce the environmental impact of households and businesses.
5. Limit traffic, noise and pollution from Hanscom Field.
6. Increase alternatives to single occupancy vehicles.
7. Encourage economic development.
8. Improve town aesthetics.

THEME IV: Reinforce Connections Between Residents, Civic Orgs & Town Government

1. Expand information dissemination options for civic activities.
2. Provide approaches to inspire the uninvolved of all ages to become involved.
3. Increase accessibility/availability of government buildings, agencies, officials, materials and services.
4. Encourage increased resident participation in and understanding of the fiscal process.
5. Promote use of volunteers (including students) and connect them with those needing services.
6. Address anger/divisiveness.

THEME V: Establish Open & Accessible Processes for Town-Wide Decision-Making, Planning and Conflict Resolution

1. Enhance and refine the fiscal process to make it useful and accessible.
2. Conduct and/or influence long-range studies, policies and regulations in the areas of fiscal, transportation, technology and environmental planning.
3. Initiate and/or participate in regional groups to resolve common problems, address common needs, capitalize on common strengths, and share services and resources in the areas of transportation planning, open space, environmental quality/monitoring, and fiscal planning.
4. Re-evaluate, through a participatory structure, the 2020 vision and planning processes periodically.
5. Strengthen and support existing democratic processes for town decision-making.

We Want to Hear From You!

Community input is central to the Lexington 2020 Vision process. There are many opportunities for participation:

- Join the 2020 Vision Committee that monitors the overall process, or join a Task Force. Contact Candy McLaughlin in the Town Manager's Office at cmclaugh@ci.lexington.ma.us or call 781-862-0500 x244.
- Answer the questions on the enclosed page and return it to the Town Manager's Office. Respond to future questions or surveys in the media and on the website.
- Identify a goal, action, or Task Force recommendation that is important to you and work individually or with others to make a difference.

Town-Wide Vision Statement

(Written in 2000 as if in the year 2020)

The Town of Lexington prides itself on being a great place to live. Residents and visitors alike characterize it as a vibrant and active community, which places a high value on learning at all ages. Its residents and employees welcome the diversity of people who are attracted to Lexington and choose to call it their home and/or place of employment.

Lexington is, and will stay, a primarily residential community with a tradition of offering quality, broad-reaching municipal services. It is committed to preserving and maintaining a sense of community that includes its historic tradition, its public and private open spaces, and its public support for civic life. It strives, however, to maintain a range of affordability. Residents recognize that these qualities are always difficult to balance.

An open and structured process of community conversation and long-term planning help the town remain forward-looking. Major elements, which are consistently addressed and evaluated, include: fiscal responsibility; sustainability of natural and human resources; transportation issues; education, and regional cooperation and integration. Residents are invested in and rely on this process as they reconcile competing needs and interests.

Lexington 2020 Vision Committee

The Committee works to identify community priorities, keep the goals current, engage larger constituencies having responsibility for action items, and develop measures for tracking and reporting on progress. The following residents have served on the committee to date:

John Bartenstein
Scott Burson
Clark Cowen
Ellie Epp
Tom Harden
Jamie Hoyte
Peter Lee
Richard Pagett
Fernando Quezada
Jerome Smith
Gerrie Weathers

Chuck Benson
Helen Cohen
Robin DiGiammarino
Sherry Gordon
Bernard Harleston
Jeanne Krieger
Paul Mammola
Peggy Perry
Ann Redmon
Heather Sweeney
Nancy Wilson

Todd Burger
Marian Cohen
Peter Enrich
Stacey Hamilton
Charles Hornig
Alan Lazarus
Fred Merrill
Marjorie Platt
Tony Siesfeld
Nancy Tentindo